



10 Principles for a Happy Life and Career

Principle 10: Generosity

By Michael A. Crawford, CPA

Mike Crawford, CPA, is the retired chairman of Crawford & Associates, P.C., an Oklahoma City-based CPA firm dedicated to state and local government accounting and consulting. Crawford is a past president of the Oklahoma Society of CPAs, an inductee into the Oklahoma Accounting Hall of Fame, the 2011 recipient of the OSCPAs Public Service Award and is past vice chairman of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Council. Over the past 30 years, he has authored a number of professional guides, practice aids and articles on governmental accounting, auditing and ethics. Crawford is also the founder of Living a Life Worth Living (www.livingalifeworthliving.com), which provides free resources to encourage readers to achieve high morals and recognizes others who do the same.

Editor's Note: Mike Crawford has, even by his own accounts, had a successful and happy career as a CPA in Oklahoma. He says 10 basic principles have guided him through a joyful life and a fulfilling career. This is the last installment. CPAFOCUS thanks Mr. Crawford for sharing these with his fellow OSCPAs Members.

For it is in giving that we receive.
 —St. Francis of Assisi

Look around and you will probably see the most joyful people in life are the most generous. In his book, “The Happiest Life,” author and radio personality Hugh Hewitt contends generosity is the prerequisite and necessary ingredient for all gifts in life and for all those who wish to be givers. Generosity puts aside self-interest in order for someone to give freely of things that matter and have value to the giver. If the giver only parts with things of little value to him or her, although this is still giving, it is not true generosity. Genuine generosity is altruistic. The giver gives with nothing expected in return. If one does a good deed and then seeks recognition and attention for doing it, then the deed is not really a good deed at all and is merely self-serving.

Some of my most treasured material possessions can be found in my collection of rock and roll memorabilia from the 1960s and 1970s era of classic rock music. As a guitarist for a rock band in the late 60s and early 70s, I developed a love for this music that spans more than 40 years. Over time, I collected a number of prized remembrances from this musical era. They include autographed guitars, albums, books, pictures and other memorabilia from

numerous artists like the Beatles, Elvis Presley, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, ZZ Top, Heart and many, many others. But for me, the greatest pleasure is not in the possession and display of these prized items, but in the giving of these items to other people, especially when I learn of their love for a favorite album or artist.

Recently, I was discussing my rock and roll memorabilia with an acquaintance when she told me of her dad’s passion for music and his hobby of building guitars. When I asked if he had any specific favorites, she said he had a particular appreciation for classic southern rock music from such groups like The Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd. I remembered that one of the items in my collection was an autographed Lynyrd Skynyrd album with particularly interesting artwork on the album cover. While I enjoyed this item in my collection, I took greater pleasure in offering it as a gift for her father. Interesting enough, the day we had this discussion was her father’s birthday and the autographed album made a perfect birthday gift. The following week, she relayed to me her dad’s thanks and said he was extremely proud to have this gift and had already displayed it on one of his walls. Tragically, a week later her dad passed away suddenly from a heart attack. In my sorrow for her and her family, I was able to take some solace in the fact that for a two week period I was able to bring a small amount of happiness to a man I had not met.

Give generously with nothing expected in return. 